



Peter Williams, *Leaving Detroit*, watercolor on paper, 2006



Peter Williams

Established Professional, Painting
Wilmington

Peter Williams is a professor at the University of Delaware. Previously, he was at Wayne State University for 17 years, where he was named Distinguished Professor. He is a graduate of the Minneapolis College of Art and Design and earned his master's from the Maryland Art Institute.

Williams is the recipient of a number of grants and awards, including a 2005 Joan Mitchell Foundation Fellowship. While at Wayne State, he was awarded a project grant from Mercedes Benz to create with his students an 11,000-foot painting for the 1997 Detroit International Auto Show. The artwork was then was toured to auto shows in Europe.

The artist has exhibited work in more than 80 group shows and at least a dozen solo shows. His art can be found in collections of the Whitney Museum, the Walker Art Center, the Mott Foundation, and The Detroit Institute of Arts, among others.

Much of my recent work has dealt with representation, portraiture of people as symbols of and for race, politics, cultural reflection, and contemporary events. I've also been making narrative compositions, which often are concerned with storytelling through an Afro-American perspective. Detroit was a potent image and place for me. The cultural and political vernacular helped me to form a visual style and a conceptual reasoning to my thinking and painting. I also have formerly been attracted to and been influenced by popular culture, comics, advertising, tabloid explanations, stereotype, and the clash of all this media and hidden history. In the end, the paintings and watercolors are representations of the people, environment and events that surround and shape me as a person, often resulting in images of distortion and comic relief. In the end, I think of myself as being interested in storytelling or as an African-American in bearing witness to the events of my time.